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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the work of Youth Service California, a state-wide collaboration of public and private organizations that since 1990 has brought the voice of the local youth service field to state level policy and program development. Youth Service California's purpose is the further development of a diverse state movement to increase and integrate youth involvement in service from kindergarten through 12th grade, colleges and universities, conservation and service corps, and throughout the community. The term "youth service" is broadly defined to include both curriculum-based service efforts commonly referred to as "service learning" and co-curricular community service. Congress passed The National and Community Service Act of 1990 and the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 in order to develop the potential and power of service for all young people. Both laws put the burden on individual states to develop high quality plans for making service part of the fabric of life. Effective state plans require the involvement of local practictioners and policymakers. Efforts of Youth Service California are suggested as a model for other local initiatives. The paper concludes with strategies for implementation. (EH)

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State Level Initiatives to Promote Youth Service
The Work of Youth Service California
and
Strategies for Local Advocates Involved in State Planning

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Youth Service California, 1994

Testimony nationwide (Lewis, Conrad & Hedin) tells us that youth involvement in community service and the learning that accompanies such involvement prevents rise to personal behaviors that destroy academic and community success. If youth service is going to be part of our national life, it must be integrated into education and community systems as a regular component of programs that promote intellectual and social development. Recognizing the potential and power of service for all young people, Congress passed The National and Community Service Act of 1990 and the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993. Both laws put the burden on *states* to develop high quality plans for making service part of the fabric of American life.

Effective state plans require the involvement of local practitioners. This paper describes the work of Youth Service California, a state-wide collaboration of public and private organizations that since 1990 has brought the voice of the local youth service field to state level policy and program development. In its work Youth Service California has articulated a state-wide vision for service as part of the curriculum and community, communicated this vision across institutions, and provided leadership for its implementation. Youth Service California's purpose is the further development of a diverse state movement to increase and integrate youth involvement in service at the kindergarten through twelfth grades, colleges and universities, conservation and service corps, and throughout the community. In this work, the term "youth service" is broadly defined to include both curriculum-based service efforts commonly referred to as *service learning* and co-curricular community service. Using the experience of Youth Service California, the paper concludes with strategies for local practitioners throughout the country who wish to build and/or influence state initiatives.

Background on the California Service Movement

The State of California has a rich tradition of youth service that includes outstanding programs lead by grass-roots and religious organizations, higher education institutions, local and state conservation corps, private and public K-12 schools, volunteer centers, civic programs, and federal volunteer programs, among others. In recent years the state has experienced tremendous growth in programs and state attention to the importance of service. Highlights include:

• The California Conservation Corps created by Governor Jerry Brown in 1976 is the oldest and largest state funded youth corps in the nation. According to the CCC brochure, "Governor Brown envisioned the program as 'a combination Jesuit seminary, Israeli kibbutz, and Marine Corps boot camp'." To date more than 55,000 young people have participated in the CCC and contributed nearly 40 million hours of service. Eleven local corps, independent non-profit organizations, have also emerged across the state. Funding for local and state corps was enhanced by the State Bottle Bill.

• The Constitutional Rights Foundation (Los Angeles Unified School District) and San Francisco School Volunteers (San Francisco Unified School District) received major foundation funding in the 1980s to build large scale service learning efforts in urban schools. These programs and others provided early testimony and models.

• In 1987, the state legislature passed the Human Corps Bill (Assemblyman John Vasconcellos). The bill recommends that college students complete 30 hours of service prior to graduation. This sparked University of California and California State University institutions to examine and enhance their campus service efforts. In 1988, President Donald Kennedy at Stanford University and Chancellor Charles Young at University of California at Los Angeles established California Campus Compact, the first state organization of college presidents and chancellors committed to increasing student involvement in service as part of higher education. Programs such as the Haas Center for Public Service at Stanford University have focused attention on faculty involvement in integrating service learning across the curriculum.

• In 1990, the California Department of Education surveyed the over 1,000 school districts in the state to determine the extent of and interest in service integrated into school curriculum. That same year, the State School Board issued a resolution on the importance of service in education. The California Department of Education has emerged as a national leader in connecting service with school reform and restructuring efforts.

• The National and Community Service Act of 1990 led to the state's CalServe initiative which brought $3 million to California for K-12 and conservation corps programs annually for three years. The state's plan for service focused on partnerships across institutions. For example, conservation corps working with schools on environmental education or higher education students assisting in the coordination or evaluation of K-12 service learning. Forty-three school and corps-based partnerships received three year grants of at least $35,000. As a result, the most promoted model for youth service in California is collaboration between multiple institutions to build a community plan for youth service.

• In addition to networks that emerged to develop communication mechanisms among like programs (ex. California Campus Compact connecting colleges and universities), California has witnessed the emergence of regional networks that enhance links across program types. These networks are led by volunteers in different parts of the state and bring together different kinds of programs for regular communication. They are key resources for informing state policy and serve as conduits of state information to local programs. Regional networks provide California with "Centers of Service Activity" -- areas with communication mechanisms and demonstrated capacity to extend youth service.

During the 1980s many of California's local program directors active in the efforts described above emerged as leaders on the national level. In the late 1980s the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the Luke B. Hancock Foundation convened meetings of these diverse program leaders. Attendees realized that local youth service programs working together could serve as a powerful catalyst for state policy and infrastructure development. These program leaders organized and became the first steering committee for Youth Service California. They were bound by the belief that young people could solve major social issues and transform society through service. Their purpose was to build a state movement where youth are seen as powerful resources and where every young person in California has the opportunity to serve as part of their education and personal development.

Youth Service California Background

Founded in 1990, Youth Service California is a state-wide collaboration of public and private organizations that promotes youth service on the state and national levels and provides technical assistance to emerging local programs. Youth Service California is co-managed by the Haas Center for Public Service at Stanford University and the Constitutional Rights Foundation in Los Angeles and is governed by a thirty-person Steering Committee representing service programs and key state agencies in California. The collaboration is made possible through private grants and affiliate contributions. It is staffed by a full-time director, a recent college graduate, a part-time consultant, and youth interns.

Youth Service California's purpose is the further development of a diverse statewide movement to increase and integrate youth involvement in service at the kindergarten through twelfth grades, colleges and universities, conservation and service corps, and throughout the community. Leaders advise state agency efforts, work to develop state policy, and assist service programs in local communities. Other activities include: an affiliates program, a state conference, a state-wide newsletter, information and technical assistance services, and co-sponsorship of Youth CAN, the State Youth Service Council.

Youth Service California has emerged as an anchor organization facilitating "top-down, bottom-up" state youth service planning and programming. As a voice of the diverse program field, it has brought local experience and possibilities to the development of state standards for programs. Most notably, Youth Service California has promoted cross-institution community collaboration, local initiative, and capacity building as fundamental parts of the state's grant programs. Through its network of diverse programs, Youth Service California has also provided efficient communication of state plans and programs. Accomplishments in its first three years include:

• Through the Steering Committee, two state conferences, a state-wide newsletter, and regional meetings, Youth Service California has brought together the work and voices of California's network of college/university presidents called California Campus Compact; diverse state and local corps in rural and urban areas; 46 volunteer centers that work with schools and non-profit agencies; 43 CalServe local community partnerships led by school districts and conservation corps; key government agencies; community based organizations; organizations promoting service on the state and national levels; and federal programs run by ACTION. State conferences have been instrumental in reinforcing California's vision to build youth service across institutions.

• Youth Service California developed and supported the state CalServe initiative by working with state agencies to organize a state function, regional public meetings, grant guidelines, and technical assistance. Youth Service California has been integrally involved in providing technical assistance to funded and unfunded programs. These activities continued with outreach for the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 prior to the Governor establishing the CA Commission on Improving Life Through Service.

• Youth Service California leaders have been active in regional efforts including Strive for Five in the Bay Area that developed a Youth Service Day and promotional efforts in six counties; and Summer of Service, a national service pilot program that involved 400 youth in full-time service to California during the summer of 1993.

• Youth Service California played an important role in policy development in California through work with Governor Wilson's office, Assembly Member Hilda Solis, and others. Youth Service California developed an overview of the status and benefits of youth service for state and federal policy makers, drafted legislation, and launched a successful effort to educate elected officials regarding the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993.

• Youth Service California, in collaboration with CalServe, established Youth CAN, a state council of 30 diverse young people ages 12-25 who are a standing committee of Youth Service California and the state CalServe effort. Participants represent service efforts throughout the state, inform state policy, and serve as knowledgeable leaders on the local level. Youth Service California has also received a grant from Philanthropic Ventures Foundation in Oakland to enable Youth CAN members to distribute grants directly to youth for service efforts that meet local needs.

• Youth Service California developed a clearinghouse and technical support effort. Over 150 calls per week include public safety and human service agencies interested in developing youth service programs, teachers and administrators working with school based programs, college student leaders, and policy makers, among others. Youth Service California has become established as a referral

center for the state. Individuals and organizations that wish to stay informed join as affiliates and receive bi-monthly resource and policy updates. There are currently 200 affiliates.

• Youth Service California has worked with CalServe to establish regional networks throughout the state. Representatives from all regional networks will eventually sit on the Youth Service California Steering Committee.

Youth Service California's Work With the State

Youth Service California has provided a unique mechanism for local practitioners to learn about and inform state planning. Its work with the state is most simply to grow and sustain high quality programs. At different times Youth Service California leaders have attended state planning retreats, written portions of the state plan, organized technical assistance and outreach meetings, drafted legislation, and provided informal guidance. Essential elements of Youth Service California's success with the state include:

• Youth Service California has defined itself as both a *state partner and an independent organization*. Thus, although it supports the work of state agencies it also serves as an advocate for new policy and program directions. Youth Service California has also been careful not to let the state set its agenda or workload.

• Youth Service California staff are not connected to any one program. Despite the programmatic interests of Steering Committee members who are local and state practitioners; *the primary focus of Youth Service California staff is communication and organizing*.

• Youth Service California involves diverse institutions and programs. Although Youth Service California affiliates agree on good principles and practices for youth service, they believe *service happens in both schools and communities*. This broad implication enables youth service to be seen as a strategy for different state agendas and programs (see attached 1994 Policy and Program Recommendations for examples).

• Youth Service California is non-partisan and *seeks to promote a state movement that is non-partisan*. Thus, Youth Service California works with legislators, the governor's office, and multiple state agencies.

Strategies for Local Advocates Interested in Building State Initiatives:

Youth Service California's experience since 1990 has implications for advocates nationwide. First and foremost, local program involvement in state planning is complex and hard. It takes time and challenges program directors to work

through the state planning culture. Second, bringing a coherent voice to state planning requires different programs to agree on critical principles and accept their diverse application. Local leaders involved in Youth Service California advocate for various models depending on their interests (education, citizenship, service rendered). The excitement of Youth Service California has been the merger of many interests that influence state grant programs. Fundamentally, Youth Service California brings to state planning the excitement and success stories from schools, corps, colleges, and communities around the state.

The following are strategies for local practitioners who wish to advocate for youth service on the state level.

• Linkages: Advocates need to bring practitioners together across streams and programs. Youth service should be linked to myriad reform efforts and programs. The state and national trend to include service language in existing policy and programs is promising (see attached 1994 Policy Recommendations for linkages Youth Service California supports). Local advocates should assess state priorities for which youth service is a proven strategy. Institutionalization will be insured when funds are leveraged and programmatic connections are made.

• Making the Academic Argument: When asked to reflect on their most vivid teaching or learning experience, most individuals describe experiential learning. Yet youth service is still most often marginalized as co-curricular. Advocates need to articulate service learning as a method for promoting higher order thinking skills, authentic assessment, and other reform initiatives, and more aggressively push for the inclusion of service learning in state curriculum frameworks, assessment reform, categorical programs, etc. It is also critical for advocates to promote university research in this area. Advocates can "infiltrate and influence" if they articulate service learning as a highly successful instructional strategy.

• Broad information network: In order to continue to infuse service into schools and communities as a tool in education reform and community development, advocates need to make sure funding opportunities and best practices are available to all potential applicants, not just those who currently run programs. This requires tremendous focus on institutional diversity in state planning. Advocates should identify diverse and articulate local practitioners with proven programs and bring them to the state planning table.

• Diversity: Advocates should build a core group that represents the profile of the true population and programs of the state. If service programs are only articulated for and funded in suburban areas, they will never be institutionalized state-wide.

• Focus on local collaborations and networks: Advocates need to push for state policies that encourage teaming of community organizations and resources, and regional networking. This means pulling together working pieces in a community; not creating new programs that will not outlast state funding. To insure the success of collaborations advocates should also encourage states to put into place processes that require accountability from all local partners.

• Research: Although both 1990 and 1993 national and community service regulations require rigorous evaluation of programs, there is little substantive research articulated in most state planning. Advocates can encourage local programs to compile and publicize summative and formative findings and make these findings the cornerstone of state planning.

• Private Sector Involvement: Advocates can bring local foundation and corporate leaders to state planning efforts. This support is critical in leveraging resources to build regional networks and match federal dollars available for service.

• Non-Partisan Development: Effective youth service program development requires a marriage of the interests of both the Governor and Legislature. Youth service has emerged as a bi-partisan issue on the national level. Advocates need to involve diverse policy makers in their states and publicize youth service as a highly successful education and community development strategy to both elected officials and candidates seeking office.

• Written materials: There is a tremendous need for clear language and information. Advocates need to articulate youth ser[illegible]n academic terms and in terms useful for community development. Diffe[illegible]eces showcasing programs and connections to state programs and n[illegible]n help expand and diversify programming.

• Balancing Youth and Community Development: Youth service programs must provide both service to the community and the development/education of the participant. Advocates can insure that programs promoted by the state balance these two critical components.

• Time: There is a perceived "crisis mode" about most state planning for service. The federal government passes down regulations that proceed through state bureaucracy. Ultimately local programs have the least time to develop funding proposals. The field can assist states in proactive vs. reactive planning. On another note, advocates should keep in mind that the single biggest challenge for practitioner involvement in state program and policy development is the time it takes away from their local program. Taking advantage of technology could alleviate this barrier to involvement.

• Media and Public Awareness: The media rarely covers youth service programs. Positive youth, school, and community efforts are most often overshadowed by crime and institutional failure. Advocates can work with media to draw attention to local programs and state planning.

• Organizing Element: Advocates need to include in their numbers, individuals who have more of an interest in organizing than program development. State planning is greatly enhanced when local practitioners envision their state role as focused on organizing the state vs. benefiting their own program.

• Keep the best people on the local level: In California we have witnessed incredible movement of some of the best local practitioners to state and national positions. We need to remind ourselves that a state's success is only as good as the success of local programs.

• Avoid the quick fix: Every policy maker's dream is to say they enacted the law that made service learning universal. Advocates need to be systematic and avoid quick fix policies such as mandatory service hours for high school graduation.

• Recruitment and Training of Practitioners: The California field is currently developing a technical assistance plan for youth service. Advocates can play an essential role in articulating technical assistance needs and becoming technical assistance providers.

• The Voice of Youth: In all its efforts advocates must involve youth themselves in the conception and direction of both local projects and state planning. They provide an element of realism and are the best promoters of the power of youth service to transform education and communities.

Conclusion

Local programs must continue to play an active role in state planning. If the National and Community Service agenda is about reconstituting communities, quality state programs and policies will only occur if they are built upon existing local success. California has produced sterling examples of school-based service learning, higher education initiatives, volunteer center and community agency initiatives, conservation corps models, and collaborations that involve all of the above and more. There now exist "centers of service activity" -- regional areas with demonstrated capacity for extending youth service and for influencing state planning. Few states have the size and diversity challenges confronting California. And yet, with the current political climate there is no better laboratory for national and community service than this dynamic state.

Too much is at stake in California and the rest of the nation to be left to chance. Local initiatives have been the cornerstone of the youth service movement: they must now be the cornerstone of state policy and programs. Institutional

diversity, strong information networks, and systematic articulation of youth service as a strategy across state programs are key to building state movements. Lessons learned in California can inform practitioners around the country who are building state initiatives. Together we can insure that youth service becomes part of every young person's experience in America.

Youth Service California Steering Committee

Youth Service California Steering Committee Members:
Dianne Bolotte, chair, Linking San Francisco
Wade Brynelson, California Department of Education
Tina Cheplick, Volunteer Center of Marin County
Robert Choate, Community Volunteer, San Francisco
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YOUTH SERVICE CALIFORNIA
1994 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Founded in 1990 Youth Service California (Youth Service California) is a state-wide collaboration of public and private organizations that promotes youth service on the state and national levels and provides technical assistance to emerging local programs. Youth Service California is co-managed by the Haas Center for Public Service at Stanford University and the Constitutional Rights Foundation in Los Angeles and is governed by a thirty-person Steering Committee. The collaboration is made possible through grants from the Luke B. Hancock Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the James Irvine Foundation, the Tides Foundation KITSA fund, and Steering Committee and affiliate contributions.

Youth Service California staff and affiliate leaders assist the State of California with youth service planning through their work with CalServe and the newly established California Commission on Improving Life Through Service. Other activities include: an affiliates program; a state conference; a state-wide newsletter; information and technical assistance services; and co-sponsorship of Youth CAN, the State Youth Service Council.

Youth Service California believes that service is an integral part of citizenship in a democratic society; thus the California national and community service movement will succeed if:

Service is integrated into the mission of all institutions in California; and

State efforts reflect and build upon the diversity of California's true population and existing service efforts.

Youth Service As a Strategy for Education Reform and Community Development

• Promote service learning as a rigorous teaching and learning strategy that helps K-12 schools and Institutions of Higher Education achieve academic goals with the following:

Fund diverse, high quality collaborations that incorporate service learning into school-based and national service efforts;

Expand pre-service and in-service training for teachers/faculty and technical assistance to schools and community agencies;

Provide guidance and incentives for service-learning as part of core curricula through framework reforms that integrate service into academic curriculum. Identify age-appropriate service learning activities and infusion points across subject areas; and

Expand Service Learning Institutes to enable programs to learn pedagogy, share successful efforts and inform state planning.

• Add service learning language in legislation and appropriate policy and program guidelines to promote service learning as a strategy and implementation method for:

School Reform/Restructuring;
Job Training Partnership Act and other vocational education efforts;
Safe Schools Act programs;
School to Work Readiness programs;
Goals 2000;
Elementary and Secondary Education Act and other categorical programs including Bilingual Education;
Alcohol and Drug Education;
Healthy Start;
Gifted and Talented Programs; and
Dropout Prevention.

• Fund high quality national and community service programs that reflect the true diversity of California.

• Connect youth service and service learning efforts as a strategy for programs across state and federal agencies that relate to poverty, housing, public safety, environmental protection and restoration, and historical preservation, among others.

• Support local conservation and national service corps and the California Conservation Corps to engage diverse young people in full-time service. Corps can be viewed and developed as education reform models that involve young people from all backgrounds to provide needed services. These models can represent the combination of technical training and service learning which reach high-risk youth as well as provide an option for youth approaching or attending college who wish to earn financial aid or repay college loans.

Infrastructure Development

• Insure that a portion of federal funds for national and community service is directed to collaborations led by representative community based organizations.

• Promote program collaboration between K-12 schools, conservation corps, colleges/universities, and community-based organizations to build strong regional programming and a state movement that gives every young person an opportunity to serve.

• Require and promote active participation by youth in the design, development, and implementation of all state funded programs.

• Continue to develop regional information networks throughout the state that meet regularly and serve as conduits of information and advice to local programs and state agencies.

• Create information systems that use the best technology to link programs across the state.

• Involve the business community by connecting the corporate community with youth service efforts.

• Work with the National Park Service to design and plan a Youth Service Learning Training Facility at the Presidio in San Francisco.

• Develop youth service awards to recognize and promote creative program models and outstanding groups of both in and out of school youth.

• Clarify and secure liability protection for schools and community programs involved in service-learning and other youth service activities.

• Document and advertise the benefits to service providers and service recipients of model service programs.

Central State Effort

• Integrate the work of the CA Commission on Improving Life Through Service, the CA Department of Education CalServe Program, the California Conservation Corps, and other state agencies to build a comprehensive plan and institutional commitment for service and volunteerism in California.

• Create a central state office to coordinate policy and program development and facilitate distribution of comprehensive information and technical assistance in order to build service opportunities for every youth in California. This office should coordinate media efforts and collect and disseminate information on programs both in and outside the state. It should disseminate information to local programs on state and federal resources that support service. It should build on existing service programs and utilize the experience of Youth Service California and its affiliate organizations to provide appropriate technical assistance to local programs.

• Promote and support collaboration between the Governor's Office and the Legislature to insure a lasting youth service movement that is non-partisan.

• Develop incentives and rewards for private sector involvement in national and community service.

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Youth Service California is a state-wide collaboration that promotes and supports youth service on the state and local levels. Its purpose is the further development of a diverse state movement to increase and integrate youth involvement in service at the kindergarten through twelfth grades, colleges and universities, conservation and service corps, and throughout the community. We believe that young people can solve major social issues and transform society through community service. With service learning they gain character and self-esteem, intellectual and life skills, plus the social and political skills of citizenship. Every young person in California should have the opportunity to serve. Together we will build a state movement where youth are seen as powerful resources in meeting social and environmental needs.

Youth Service California 1994, (415) 723-3803